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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

Mexico – Floods

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008

November 9, 2007

BACKGROUND AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Heavy rains throughout October caused rivers to overflow and led to widespread flooding and landslides in Mexico’s southern Tabasco and Chiapas states. According to the Government of Mexico (GOM) General Directorate of Civil Protection (GDCP), the flooding and landslides killed at least 13 people and affected as many as 1.2 million others.
- A large landslide on November 5 buried the town of Juan de Grijalva in Ostuacán Municipality, Chiapas State. Most of the village’s 300 inhabitants reportedly fled to higher ground. Although casualty figures and damage assessments are ongoing, GOM indicated that 8 people are confirmed dead and as many as 23 others are missing.
- On November 5, U.S. Ambassador Antonio O. Garza determined that the disaster warranted U.S. Government assistance and requested USAID/OFDA disaster support. To date, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$420,000 in humanitarian assistance and deployed a five-person assessment team to work with USAID/Mexico and GOM counterparts to conduct assessments in flood-affected areas to determine priority needs. USAID/OFDA is coordinating U.S. government flood relief efforts with the GDCP, the GOM’s Secretary of External Relations, USAID/Mexico, and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Number Killed	13 people	GOM GDCP, November 9, 2007
Number Displaced in Tabasco	126,581 people	GOM GDCP, November 7, 2007
Number Displaced in Chiapas	3,448 people	GOM GDCP, November 9, 2007
Total Affected Population	1.2 million people	GOM GDCP, November 7, 2007

FY 2008 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE¹

USAID/OFDA Assistance to Mexico for Floods	\$419,046
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance to Mexico for Floods.....	\$419,046

CURRENT SITUATION

- Water levels have begun to recede across the region, but humanitarian needs remain in flood-affected communities. At the height of the emergency, more than 126,000 people in Tabasco State and 5,000 people in Chiapas State evacuated to temporary shelters. According to CONAGUA, the GOM’s National Water Commission, the rains and flooding caused 15 rivers and 4 streams to overflow.
- In Chiapas State, the floods affected nearly 330,000 people in 42 municipalities, according to the Chiapas State Directorate of Civil Protection. The floods also caused nearly 220 landslides, damaging roads and bridges.
- The GOM is conducting aerial assessments to evaluate damages in flood-affected communities and airlifting emergency relief supplies, including food and mattresses, to areas inaccessible by land. In addition, the GOM is delivering emergency relief supplies, including blankets, food, mattresses, and water, to hospitals and shelters.
- On November 6, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched a preliminary \$1 million emergency appeal to support the response in flood-affected areas of southern Mexico.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

- Humanitarian agencies are concerned that the standing water may lead to increased rates of water-borne, respiratory, and skin diseases. To date, no outbreaks have occurred, and the GOM’s Ministry of Health is taking measures, such as a Hepatitis A vaccination campaign, to prevent and monitor spread of diseases.
- On November 6, a USAID/OFDA disaster expert in Tabasco State met with CONAGUA to discuss assistance for standing water removal. USAID/OFDA has provided funding for 95 water pumps to support CONAGUA’s efforts.
- The GOM’s Ministry of Health is conducting basic water and sanitation activities in 14 communities in Chiapas State. In addition, CONAGUA has delivered seven mobile water purification plants to Chiapas and Tabasco states and has deployed teams to 23 municipalities to assess the condition of safe drinking water systems in Chiapas State.

¹ In FY 2007, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 to Mexico in response to Hurricane Dean.

Shelter

- According to the Directorates of Civil Protection for Tabasco and Chiapas states, nearly 480,000 homes in Tabasco and 4,700 homes in Chiapas suffered significant damage from flood waters. USAID/OFDA's initial \$50,000 in assistance supported the local purchase of temporary shelter materials for 300 families. On November 8, USAID/OFDA provided additional funding through USAID/Mexico to purchase 2,000 cots for families whose homes and beds were destroyed by flood waters.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- On November 4, U.S. Ambassador Antonio O. Garza requested USAID/OFDA disaster assistance due to the impact of the floods in Chiapas and Tabasco states. To date, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$420,000 in humanitarian assistance.
- Beginning November 1, a five-person USAID/OFDA assessment team deployed to Mexico to work with USAID/Mexico and GOM counterparts to identify the most immediate needs and appropriate USAID/OFDA assistance. The team includes three disaster specialists performing assessment in Tabasco and Chiapas states and a Regional Advisor and Information Officer in Mexico City.
- In support of IFRC's emergency flood appeal, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 through the American Red Cross (AmRC) working with the Mexican Red Cross for the local purchase of emergency relief supplies, including hygiene kits, kitchen kits, mosquito nets, water buckets, and water containers, benefiting approximately 10,000 persons through February 2008. Through USAID/Mexico, USAID/OFDA also provided GDCP with \$120,000 for 95 water removal pumps and 2,000 cots for flood-affected communities.
- On November 7, the State of California's Governor's Office of Emergency Services transported disaster relief equipment, including inflatable rubber boats, motors, and paddles, to the Mexicali Office of Emergency Services to support GOM's rescue operations in southern Mexico. The GOM military will airlift the equipment to flood-affected areas in Chiapas and Tabasco states.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
AmRC	Emergency Relief Supplies	Chiapas and Tabasco states	\$249,046
USAID/Mexico	Temporary Shelter Materials, Cots, and Water Pumps	Chiapas and Tabasco states	\$170,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$419,046
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO IN FY 2008			\$419,046

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of November 9, 2007.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for flood response efforts in Mexico can be found at www.interaction.org. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Mexico may be available at www.reliefweb.int.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov – Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/